

CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

Claims 11, 14-16 and newly added 19-20 should read as follows:

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Sub C1

11.(amended) A reactor for the catalytic ~~oxidation~~ of ammonia to nitrogen oxides, which contains a noble metal gauze catalyst and a heat exchanger in that order in the direction of flow and has a catalyst for the decomposition of N₂O which is prepared by combining CuAl₂O₄ with tin, lead and/or an element of main group II or transition group II of the Periodic Table of the Elements as oxide or salt or in elemental form and subsequently calcining the mixture thus obtained at from 300 to 1300°C and a pressure in the range from 0.1 to 200 bar located between the noble metal gauze catalyst and the heat exchanger.

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14.(amended) An apparatus for preparing nitric acid from ammonia, comprising in this order

- a reactor as claimed in claim 11,
- an absorption unit for the absorption of nitrogen oxides in an aqueous medium.

15.(amended) An apparatus for preparing nitric acid from ammonia, comprising in this order

- a reactor as claimed in claim 12,
- an absorption unit for the absorption of nitrogen oxides in an aqueous medium.

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16.(amended) A process for the catalytic decomposition of N_2O in a gas mixture obtained in the preparation of nitric acid by catalytic oxidation of ammonia in a reactor having a noble metal gauze catalyst and a heat exchanger in that order in the flow direction, where N_2O is decomposed catalytically over a catalyst for the decomposition of N_2O located between the noble metal catalyst and the heat exchanger so that the hot gas mixture obtained from the catalytic oxidation of ammonia is brought into contact with the catalyst for the decomposition of N_2O prior to subsequent cooling, wherein the catalyst for the decomposition of N_2O is prepared by combining $CuAl_2O_4$ with tin, lead and/or an element of main group II or transition group II of the Periodic Table of the Elements as oxide or salt or in elemental form and subsequently calcining the mixture thus obtained at from 300 to 1300°C and a pressure in the range from 0.1 to 200 bar.

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19.(newly added) An apparatus for preparing nitric acid from ammonia, comprising in this order

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- a reactor as claimed in claim 14,
- an absorption unit for the absorption of nitrogen oxides in an aqueous medium and,
- a reduction unit for the selective catalytic reduction of nitrogen oxides.

20.(newly added) An apparatus for preparing nitric acid from ammonia, comprising in this order

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- a reactor as claimed in claim 15,
- an absorption unit for the absorption of nitrogen oxides in an aqueous medium and,
- a reduction unit for the selective catalytic reduction of nitrogen oxides.
